

U.S. at Crossroads in India-Pakistan Policy

By Selig S. Harrison

Harrison has been The Washington Post correspondent in India and Pakistan since November, 1962, and was an Associated Press correspondent in New Delhi from 1951 to 1954. He is the author of "India: The Most Dangerous Decades," and "India, Pakistan and the United States," and contributes articles on the subcontinent to Foreign Affairs.

NEW DELHI—The United States has reached an historic crossroads in its relations with India and Pakistan.

Economic aid totalling \$5.9 billion to India and \$3.2 billion to Pakistan is just beginning to yield dividends in industry and agriculture. Yet the United States is losing ground politically in both countries, fenced in by contradictory, outdated policies in the critical area of military aid.

U.S. policymakers have dreamed of an India-Pakistan detente leading to joint defense and alignment against Peking. This dream has faded as the two U.S.-armed rivals have turned increasingly against each other.

The Soviet Union, capitalizing on U.S. discomfiture, is bidding to become the major outside influence in the region.

The Soviet challenge was a major element in U.S. policy-making for the subcontinent a decade ago. But far-reaching world changes make the present moment radically different. President Johnson must now reckon with the rise of China as a nuclear power, India's belated recognition of Chinese ambitions, and the birth of what appears to be a hardy new neutralism in Pakistan.

The current policy debate in Washington reveals diametrically opposed judgments on the relative importance of India and Pakistan, and on Chinese and Soviet intentions and capabilities. Some people see India, in particular, as the place where the United States will ultimately have to draw the line in Asia. Others throw up their hands at the complexity of the subcontinent's problems, with its 585 million people, its internecine strife and economic despair.

Three broad policy choices appear to be receiving U.S. consideration:

1 TO EMBRACE Pakistan anew in the belief that U.S.-Soviet tension will continue to be the overriding U.S. concern. India is a subsidiary strategic factor in this approach, and the possibility of Chinese border incursions and future missile-rattling is discounted.

2 TO FOCUS on India as the central factor in a China-oriented policy. This assumes a balance of power between India and Pakistan more favorable to India than at present and minimizes the danger of full-scale war between the two.

3 TO DISENGAGE from military aid in both countries, transferring resources to economic aid. This would be accompanied by a stronger assurance of U.S. intervention in the event of a conflict with China.

How It Began

SOME HISTORICAL review is needed to assess these options.

The \$1.2-billion U.S.-subsidized military buildup in Pakistan began in 1954 when the Soviet Union seemed the only significant challenge to U.S. security. Indian warnings that arms aid to Pakistan created an unnatural balance of power which could set the stage for Indo-Pakistani conflict appeared irrelevant in the face of the clear and present Russian threat.

Washington then viewed China as a secondary military factor, dangerous only as an adjunct of the Soviets. New Delhi shared part of that view and ignored the military implications of the takeover of Tibet. Prime Minister Nehru strode the world stage to the applause of a new country hungry for recognition as a great Asian power. The last thing he wanted was a confrontation with China demanding Indian military reliance on the West.

After the 1954 U.S.-Pakistan pact and the Moscow decision to back India on Kashmir, a process of polarization started between a U.S.-oriented Pakistan and an increasingly Soviet-minded India. It took the shock of the 1963 Chinese border incursions to check this process and to stimulate fresh thinking in India based on a reluctant acknowledgement of overlapping Indian, American and Soviet interests in deterring

Chinese expansion.

Demoralized by its defeat by China and uneasy in its adjustment to dependency in world affairs, India has fought to hold onto national self-esteem.

Changes in Pakistan

AS INDIA grew despondent, Pakistan acquired a corresponding measure of confidence.

Internally, Pakistan got off to a late start toward planned economic development after the 1958 takeover by President Ayub Khan, but has had a spurt of progress in the past three years.

At the same time, the country has been undergoing a thorough foreign policy transformation. After 10 years of virtually exclusive dependence on the United States, Pakistan has increasingly asserted its independence of Washington. To identify his regime with a newly aroused nationalist public opinion and a deep-seated but newly surfaced neutralism, Ayub has been "normalizing" relations first with Peking and then with Moscow.

The Ayub mission to Moscow last March began a change in Soviet-Pakistan relations which is likely to grow in importance. Moscow's "neutrality" over the Rann of Kutch dispute after years of automatic favoritism for New Delhi was one of several steps making it clear that the Kremlin has encouraged Ayub's policy shift and hopes to extend its influence in Pakistan while retaining what has been built up in India.

Moscow apparently sees an opening in Rawalpindi as a chance to limit Chinese influence while joining China to quicken the erosion of a Western beachhead. New Delhi has complained, but not loudly. The Soviets know that India is now in a considerably weakened bargaining position.

Assumptions Reassessed

MOSCOW IS thus recasting its policies as the situation changes. Washington also appears to face the need to reassess earlier assumptions.

The most important assumption is that Pakistan shares a common interest with the United States in opposing the expansion of Soviet influence. This is not true now, and never really was.

Pakistan's chief motivation since 1954 has been to bolster its bargaining position vis-a-vis India. Pakistan's leaders talked themselves into an anti-Communist alliance because it was linked in their minds with the mistaken assumption that the United States was opting for Pakistan over India in South Asian affairs.

As India and the United States have developed a common interest with regard to China, Pakistan has grown restive.

Like India, Pakistan sees the world from an Asian, ex-colonial perspective and had mixed feelings from the start about one-sided dependence on the West. It was one of the first countries to recognize Red China and quietly kept its lines to Peking open throughout the period of alliance with the United States. The Chinese incursions into India and the start of U.S. military aid to New Delhi merely accelerated those Pakistani neutralist tendencies that had been worrying State Department insiders for years.

The contradictions in the U.S.-Pakistan alliance became apparent when Ayub refused President Kennedy's request to send troops to Laos in May, 1961. Ayub said his troops were needed on the Indian border, signaling the effective end of Pakistani participation in SEATO.

Like SEATO, the Central Treaty Organization has little solid military content today. The United States can use jet airstrips built under the aid program only if Pakistan itself is attacked. Pakistani officials doubt they could fulfill CENTO treaty obligations to Iran and Turkey, because of what they regard as a persistent threat from India.

Military Aid Balance

AS THESE contradictions developed, Pakistan received \$1.2 billion in U.S. military aid in ten years while India, four times larger, has received \$200 million in military aid since 1962.

There are qualitative differences, too. Pakistan has more than 1000 tanks. American aid gave Rawalpindi a 4-to-1 margin in armor through the 1950s; it will continue to have a wide margin of operational superiority until 1967 though numbers are now near parity as the result of a recent Indian deal with Moscow for amphibious tanks.

In addition, U.S. aid has assured Pakistan a spare parts and maintenance superiority over India, plagued by a foreign exchange scarcity, so that it has an estimated 3-to-1 edge in battle-ready "effectives."

In airpower, India has a 4-to-1 superiority in number of planes, but its effective superiority is closer to 2-to-1. Pakistan's U.S.-supplied F-86 jets are better than India's Mysteres.

Limits on Indian Aid

THE UNITED STATES has carefully controlled its military aid to India, avoiding the open-ended commitment made in Pakistan to maintain and modernize over-all force levels. This has reflected a determination to keep the initiative in U.S. hands, but the guiding consideration has been a desire not to rock the boat in Pakistan.

Less than 4 per cent of military aid to India through 1964 has gone to weaponry (rifles, machine guns and mortars). The major items for the army have been ammunition, communications equipment, bridges and other engineering items and clothing. Requests for medium tanks and artillery comparable to those given Pakistan have been refused.

Aid has been largely restricted to items useful for mountain engagements with China which would not also be of use in the plains against Pakistan.

Of course, India's superiority in manpower and resources gives it overwhelming staying power for a protracted military showdown. The Indian Army outnumbers the Pakistani Army 4-to-1, and India is beginning to develop its own defense industries.

I—The Pro-Pakistan Option

NOW THAT THE original collective security basis of the United States Pakistan alliance has gradually lost its meaning, Pakistan is important on the U.S. strategic map only as the locale of intelligence activities.

This provides the governing argument for a Pakistan-oriented policy, the first of the three U.S. choices: that the United States should not risk losing its intelligence benefits in Pakistan for the sake of hypothetical long-term strategic interests in India.

Supporters of a new American embrace of Pakistan contend that the Soviet Union is still a potential antagonist in a military showdown — witness Viet-Nam — and that Pakistan should be given needed military hardware to retain existing ties, as a quid pro quo for continued willingness to stand up to Moscow. Above all, they feel, Pakistan is entitled to a veto over the pace and character of Indian military expansion, since this is seen as a threat to Pakistan's survival.

Underpinning these positive arguments is a negative judgment about India: that as a founder of the neutralist club it is beyond repentance and will always be inhibited in military collaboration with the United States by its frank regard for the Soviet Union.

Arrayed against these policy judgments are some significant new factors:

- New U.S. intelligence techniques have made U.S. operations in Pakistan less vital to national security, though still important.

- The rise of neutralist public opinion in Pakistan as an expression of nationalism makes it questionable how long these U.S. activities will remain politically acceptable.

- More important, the United States faces an unprecedented crisis of confidence in India.

This crisis is the product of a dramatic flareup of Indian fear and resentment of Pakistan since the Kutch and Kashmir fighting this year. It has produced a sense of alienation from the United States and resurgent interest in holding on to friendship with the Soviet Union while moderating India's position toward China.

Indian resentment of U.S. military aid to Pakistan was repressed after the start of large-scale economic aid to India in 1957 and military aid in 1962. But it ran deep and boiled over as a result of American failure to protest Pakistan's use of U.S. tanks and recoilless rifles in Kutch—attested by U.S. military observers—despite past U.S. pledges that such arms would not be used against India.

The aid treaty gives Washington no legal basis for a formal protest to Rawalpindi, though Pakistan has been told America "prefers" to see its equipment kept away from border disputes; U.S. silence on the issue is inexplicable to Indian public opinion.

The underlying reason for Indian resentment is not so much fear of a Pakistani invasion as the belief that U.S. aid has given Pakistan a bargaining power with India out of all proportion to its size. Despite their edge in manpower, Indians argue that Pakistan has a disproportionately large and qualitatively superior military establishment that it could not afford without a U.S. subsidy. They feel Pakistan would not dare to "harass" India in Kashmir or Kutch if it were not for this.

United States help against China in 1962 is acknowledged and remembered, but the emotional importance of Pakistan stands to blur the memory. Pakistan's use of American arms in Kutch strengthened those who argue that India cannot confront China and Pakistan at the same time. They think that instead of a stiff posture toward China inviting possible conflict and increased dependence on the West, India should moderate its stand on the Ladakh border dispute with China and concentrate on the more manageable challenge posed by Pakistan.

II—The 'Chinese' Option

THE CENTRAL factor conditioning what the United States does in South Asia today is the rise of China as a nuclear power.

This factor provides a major argument for the second U.S. policy choice: focusing on India as a keystone to a China-oriented policy. It assumes that

Continued



the United States is likely to be called upon increasingly to acknowledge its stake in Indian security as part of its response to Chinese expansion.

Whether or not New Delhi embarks on its own long-term nuclear program—and the rise of anti-American feeling in India strengthens sentiments for such a move—the specter of Chinese missiles has spurred India's desire for stronger conventional forces to deter border incursions during the next decade. U.S. willingness to help India build an independent conventional deterrent will have an important bearing on Indo-American relations as the United States seeks to dissuade New Delhi from making nuclear weapons.

U.S. interest in Indian security won limited recognition in the military aid program launched after China's 1962

border incursions. The fact that Washington took its decision to aid India without seeking Pakistan's concurrence was a major step toward a reoriented South Asia policy.

But the United States has hesitated to go all the way. No definite commitment to intervene in India in the event of Chinese aggression has been made. It is not clear where America draws the line and what Chinese action would provoke what measure of U.S. intervention. It is clear only that Washington would limit its help to air intervention.

Beyond this, by tacit mutual agreement, the U.S. commitment has been left vague. India, for its part, has had no desire to create unnecessary strains in its relations with the Soviet Union. The United States, for its part, has

hoped to link its commitment with an understanding as to the extent of future Soviet-Indian military ties and has thus held back its trump card. And the United States has also limited its military aid to India, primarily to avoid upsetting its relations with Pakistan.

The immediate necessity for a redefinition of U.S. objectives arises now for several reasons:

- U.S.-Pakistan relations have become so strained that the United States could be forced into a redefinition of purpose gracefully by the pressure of events. This would add unnecessarily to the U.S. losses in Pakistan and detract from the expected political gain in India.

- India has already demonstrated that it will not surrender its freedom to seek arms from Moscow. After Washington refused to supply F-104s, India

closed a long-pending deal for Soviet Mig 21 supersonic jets and negotiations for expediting the assembly of Migs in India have recently been completed in Moscow.

• Both India and Pakistan are pressing the United States to supply modern F-5 fighter bombers.

Viewed in the light of possible further Chinese incursions in the Himalayas, the military case for five to ten squadrons of F-5s for India appears strong. In contrast to 1962, when Nehru withheld some air support for Indian troops to avoid escalation, India now plans to bomb roads, supply depots and airstrips as its immediate response to any border challenge.

The ability to carry out an air counterattack is seen as the crux of a meaningful deterrent for India. This might be accompanied by a U.S. pledge to go to the defense of Indian cities and possibly by assurance of help from Polaris submarines, to forestall missile blackmail by Peking.

Advocates of F-5 and other military aid argue that giving India an Asian-style "trip wire" would minimize the risk of America's actually becoming embroiled in South Asia.

The idea of giving New Delhi a military aid to Pakistan would confighter-bomber force will probably not be examined in terms of the Chinese threat without reference to its consequences in Pakistan, however. There is always the danger that this force would some day be used against Pakistan.

Pakistan's Position

PROPONENTS of an India-centered U.S. policy do not suggest that Pakistan is expendable. They envisage a reallocation of priorities in which Pakistan would lose its veto power over U.S. aid to India.

The aid Pakistan itself gets would not suffer except in relation to the amount of aid given to its rival. In fact, the economic aid now succeeding in Pakistan, would be beefed up as part of an over-all regional increase.

Soviet aid to Pakistan would be welcomed, up to a point, as in India, to offset an otherwise one-sided U.S. burden.

Far from writing off Pakistan, the advocates of this policy choice have suggested various "regional approaches" that might enable Washington to reduce its losses in Rawalpindi.

One proposal developed in detail by Pentagon planners is a policy which would give F-5s to both countries. U.S. tinue as an expedient, recognizing that Pakistan's major objective is to have a deterrent against India.

But Pakistan, while grudgingly adjusting to the fact that India may get F-5s, insists that as an ally restricted to one (i.e. American) source of supply, it is entitled to a bigger quota.

Pakistan has hinted at reprisals if the United States rejects this view and chooses for military reasons to give India, say, twice what Pakistan gets. But it is hard to see how the United States could justify giving high-performance aircraft to Pakistan as long as Pakistan acknowledges only one military rival—India.

III—The Disengagement Policy

CONFRONTED WITH this perennial tension between India and Pakistan, the United States may be tempted to conclude that the only sensible course would be disengagement from military aid in both countries — the third policy choice.

Why, it is asked, should America subsidize an arms race between two hostile neighbors?

Why should the United States give military aid to Pakistan when it frequently opposes the United States diplomatically and no longer recognizes a Communist military threat?

Who is to say that India will never in a moment of trial or hysteria use U.S.-supplied planes against Pakistan?

Advocates of disengagement argue that India should be given a U.S. pledge of crisis intervention in lieu of military aid and that funds now slated for military aid should be added to existing economic-aid budgets. They say that in any case this is a better allocation of limited aid resources for two hard-pressed developing countries.

Risks of Withdrawal

THERE ARE counterarguments, however. For one thing, to leave India's defense as weak as it now is, while committing the United States to intervention, would dangerously limit American freedom to choose when and under what circumstances to fight back against Communist China.

And the fact remains that regardless of what Washington does, both India and Pakistan will probably feel compelled to carry on a limited arms race and make whatever purchases they can in the world arms market.

Disengagement would also favor Pakistan although it would have the appearance of an even-handed gesture intended to shock both countries into realizing that their drift into hostility is futile.

Actually, disengagement would mean a U.S. withdrawal from India after only two years of limited military aid while in Pakistan the United States has assumed a major role in equipping and maintaining 5½ divisions for almost 11 years. Thus, while the immediate impact of disengagement would be harder on Pakistan with its one-sided dependence on U.S. aid, the real loser would be India.

Credits Instead of Grants

A VARIATION of disengagement is a plan to scrap the present form of grant aid in both countries while retaining a program of dollar credits. Half the aid funds now available to India are in the form of such credits.

A credit program would permit India to achieve what it regards as an appropriate military balance with Pakistan without exclusive dependence on Moscow, although at great cost.

A credit program also permits the seller to shift the responsibility for purchasing arms to the recipients, and to some extent he avoids direct responsibility for their military misadventures.

But the economic burden of defense spending shifts with the responsibilities. It might be argued that credits, in place of grants would force India and Pakistan to prune defense budgets, but this would be an enormous gamble. The United States might find itself subsidizing an arms race in a new way, underwriting military spending with its economic aid in both countries.

IV—Analysis and Conclusions

MILITARY AID policy, of course, cannot be divorced from political and economic factors. Advocates of both the first and third choices — a Pakistan-oriented policy or disengagement — can argue that the second U.S. policy option, particularly giving air power to India in accordance with its size and needs while giving Pakistan a smaller companion program, could drive Rawalpindi into a dangerous intimacy with Peking.

Such a risk exists, but the fear appears exaggerated. It reflects a misunderstanding of Pakistan's neutralism, and a hostility to it, that does not accord with American willingness to tolerate Indian neutralism. Rawalpindi's neutralism, growing out of a nationalist upsurge connected with increased attention to internal development, is not conceived in terms of exclusive links with any one power.

In particular, Pakistan's economic and political stake in its new ties with the Soviet Union is likely to restrain whole-hog commitments to Red China.

Russia's Focus

CONTINUING Soviet preoccupation with South Asia is visible in its increasing aid presence there, where it has advantages in competing with the United States: its anticolonialist, anti-racist image (whatever the realities), and its willingness to back government-controlled heavy industry. The public sector is popular in both India and Pakistan, where the U.S. preference for private enterprise is misunderstood in the light of powerful private family empires.

Continued

The Soviet interest in the subcontinent is a warning that unilateral American disengagement might surrender the all-important military-aid area to Russia, the chief U.S. rival. But the Soviet desire to appear more disinterested in the Indo-Pakistan conflict may lead Moscow to tread more carefully in military aid to India, though there have been few clear signs so far. This could open the possibility of a tacit agreement by both Washington and Moscow to freeze arms aid to the subcontinent.

Such a joint agreement could provide a basis for U.S. disengagement. On the negative side, it would heighten the need for a U.S. commitment to intervene in case of a Chinese attack and add to the risks that intervention might actually become necessary. It would leave the United States with the heavy political burden in India of its past record of a one-sided military buildup in Pakistan.

But balancing all factors, a U.S.-Soviet military aid freeze appears well worth considering — if it is possible. It offers a means of avoiding the risks inherent in arming two rivals.

It is even conceivable that in a more relaxed climate marked by parallel U.S. and Soviet disengagement, the combined weight of the two big powers could enforce an uneasy rapprochement between the two neighbors. Some advocates of U.S. disengagement base their pleas on the assumption that a way can be found to make India and Pakistan work together, especially economically, despite their present veering toward the precipice.

The Ultimate Choice?

IN THE ABSENCE of a rapprochement between India and Pakistan, and in the absence of diplomatic developments making possible a U.S.-Soviet freeze on arms aid to the two countries, many observers think that only one choice remains to the United States.

That is, in essence, the second choice — a policy risking continued military aid to both India and Pakistan, but on a new basis recognizing India's larger size and its importance in a China-focused Asia strategy.

25X1

Mr.



7007

Hold for DDI
memo.



25X1